

The President's Daily Brief

June 5, 1976

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~~Top Secret~~ 25X1

Exempt from general
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exemption category 5X(1)(2)(3)
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FOR THE PRESIDENT ONLY

June 5, 1976

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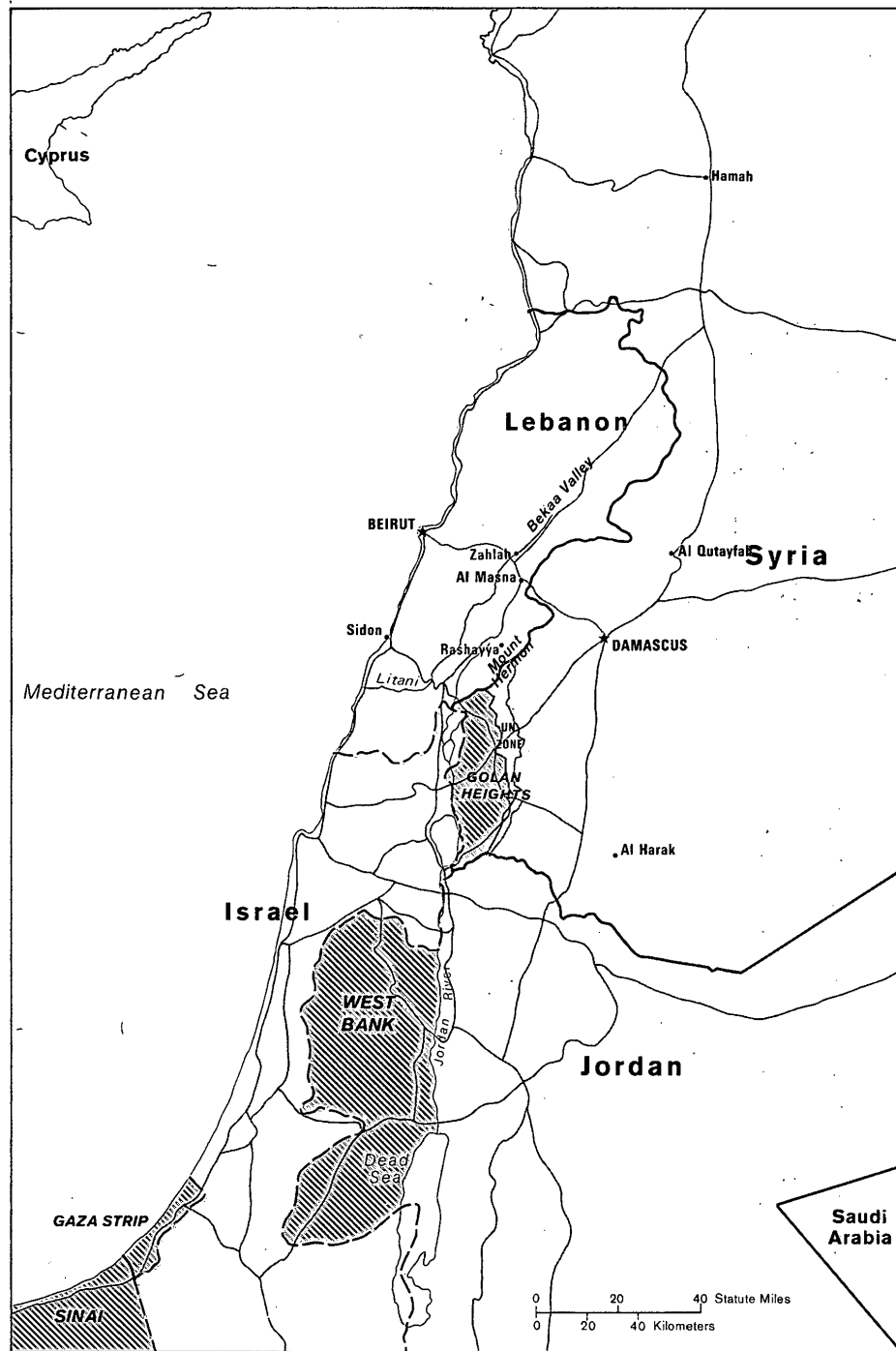
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SYRIA-LEBANON: *Damascus reportedly is preparing for possible further military advances in Lebanon.*

An armored brigade at Al Harak in southern Syria has been placed on full alert for possible movement into Lebanon. This unit is one of only two armored brigades defending the southern Golan Heights.

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The Syrian troops that moved into eastern Lebanon early this week have tightened their control over the area around Zahlah, and apparently succeeded yesterday in forcing leftist and Palestinian elements to withdraw from Christian territory west of Zahlah.

Although most of the Syrian troops are holding their positions near Zahlah, an armored battalion that had been based at Al Masna reportedly moved south to Rashayya Thursday to take over positions held by the renegade Lebanese Arab Army.

There reportedly have been some isolated clashes between Syrian and Palestinian troops. On at least one occasion Syrians skirmished with Palestine Liberation Army troops.

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The PLA previously served as an instrument of Syrian policy in Lebanon, but has become an increasingly unreliable prop as Damascus' differences with Yasir Arafat and independent Palestinian groups have sharpened. The PLA defections undoubtedly influenced Syria's decision to send greater numbers of its own forces into Lebanon.

Recent private comments by several senior Syrian officials tend to confirm that Damascus is determined to introduce more troops into Lebanon, if necessary, in order to enforce a durable cease-fire.

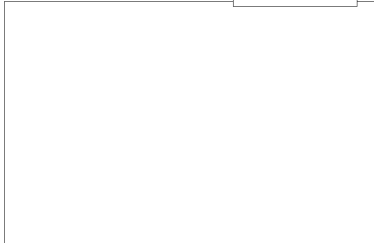
One of President Asad's close advisers told a US official early this week that Damascus "cannot stop" until a political solution is found.

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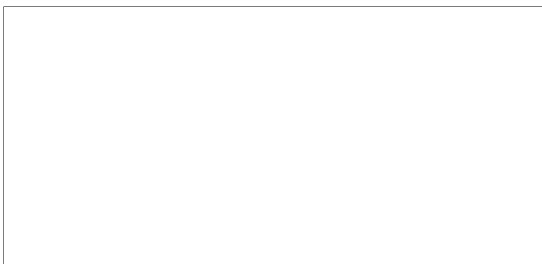
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SYRIA-ISRAEL: [REDACTED]



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FRANCE-LEBANON: *When Syrian Foreign Minister Khaddam was in Paris yesterday, the French publicly reiterated their offer to send a small peacekeeping force to Lebanon.*

We have no indication that the Syrians, who hold the key to whether the French decide to move, have requested French assistance. Syria has mixed feelings about the use of French troops. It sees their involvement as a possible way of patrolling Christian areas otherwise off limits to Syrian and Palestinian troops, yet it is reluctant to allow Paris to proceed while there remains any hope that Damascus can salvage a negotiated peace and get full credit.

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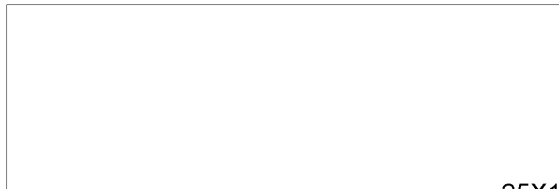
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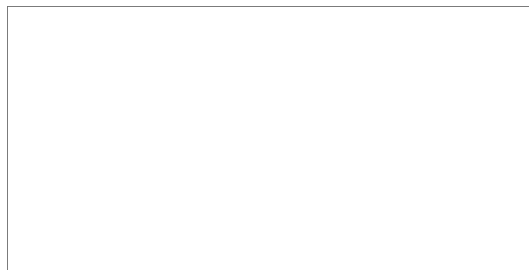
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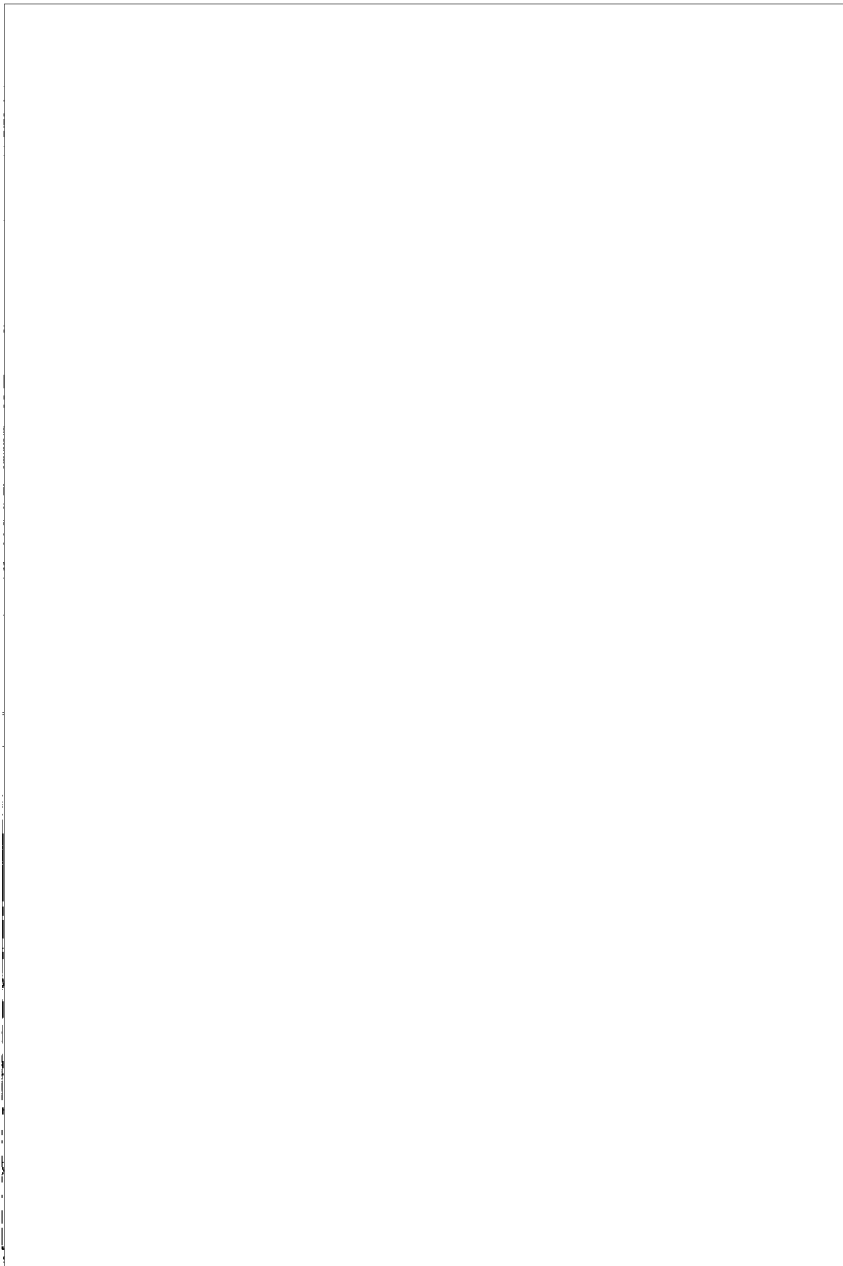
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NOTES

The Soviets have launched their new submarine-launched ballistic missile--the SS-NX-17--seven times since the test program began a year ago, and we now are able to estimate some of the missile's key characteristics.

The SS-NX-17, which is a possible follow on to the SS-N-6, has two stages and is the first Soviet submarine-launched ballistic missile to use solid propellants. It carries a post-boost vehicle, but so far we have not noted a MIRVed payload on any of the flights.

The SS-NX-17 can probably deliver a payload of about 1,200 kilograms (2,650 pounds) to a range of about 1,675 nautical miles. While only one reentry vehicle was observed during each of the tests to date, the missile's payload weight is large enough to include three MIRVs.

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Shortages of food, especially meat, are spreading and becoming more severe in the USSR.

Ambassador Stoessel reports that on a recent trip to Siberia he found the food situation considerably worse than reported during the past winter. In Khabarovsk, embassy officials saw long lines of shoppers waiting to buy poor quality pork. At a meat store in Irkutsk queues of shoppers held coupons, suggesting that formal rationing is occurring there.

Western press reports that food shortages have caused some localized demonstrations have not been confirmed, but there is evidence that Soviet officials are concerned about the possibility of such outbursts.

Although the appearance of spring vegetables should ease the overall situation, shortages of meat and meat products will intensify.

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